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THE CAUSE OF THE SUN SPOTS AND THEIR PERIODICITY.

Mr. W. T. LYNN suggests, in a letter to the August *Observatory*, that "the most probable cause of the periodicity of the solar spots" is that they are produced by a ring of meteors which revolve around the Sun and pass very near his body when in perihelion. If the period of revolution of the ring were assumed to be 11.1 years, the aphelion of the orbit would be slightly outside of *Saturn's* orbit. It would have to be assumed that, as in other well-known streams, the meteors were especially numerous in a particular part of the stream, and that a maximum of Sun spots is produced when this dense part is passing perihelion.

Mr. LYNN's suggestions form an important modification of an old theory that the spots are due to the falling of meteoric matter upon the Sun. However, if it be held that the spots are caused *directly* by the fall of meteors, there still remains the enormous difficulty of explaining the distribution of the spots in two well-defined spot zones. Further, the meteors would approach always from the same direction in space, and the Sun spots should *originate* almost wholly on one hemisphere (with reference to space) of the Sun.

W. W. C.

THE NEXT TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN.

Astronomers are already beginning to plan for the next observable total solar eclipse, which occurs 1896, August 8. The line of totality passes through Norway, the island of Nova Zembla, central Siberia, northeastern China, and the island of Yezo in Japan. The eclipse at Yezo occurs at 3 P. M., and the duration of totality is about 2<sup>m</sup> 40<sup>s</sup>. European parties will probably establish their stations, for the most part, in northeastern Norway and on Nova Zembla. American observers will undoubtedly go to Yezo, if the meteorological conditions are not too unpromising. When the results obtained at the April, 1893, eclipse have been published and discussed, it will be none too soon to prepare for the eclipse of 1896. Just what will be the most important problems left over from the recent eclipse cannot now be stated, but spectroscopic observations will undoubtedly occupy the most important places on the observing programmes.

W. W. C.

*JUPITER'S SATELLITES.*

The August number of *l'Astronomie*, in commenting upon certain observations of *Jupiter's* satellites made by the Arequipa